

Network News

Parent Information Network

April 2006

Vol. 14 No. 3

Look What's New!

by Barb Ross

Enhancing Arizona's Parent Networks

NEW LOGO AND WEB ADDRESS!



www.azeapn.org

Enhancing Arizona's Parent Networks (EAPN) is the collaborative effort of parent groups, organizations and agencies that believe all children with special needs and their families should have access to information, support, and training. EAPN is a statewide initiative that strives to increase access to, and availability of, comprehensive and accurate information for parents and professionals. As well as, improve the quality of parent participation and leadership that builds effective partnerships with professionals. In addition, EAPN provides a calendar of events throughout Arizona that addresses the interests and needs of families and professionals.

The Basics of Extended School Year (ESY) Services

by Kristie Melkers

All children who have a current IEP (Individualized Education Program) should be considered for extended school year services (ESY) by their IEP team. ESY services are provided to prevent the loss of the child's learning progress from the regular school year, a decision that is based on a review of existing information about the child and a prediction by the team as to whether that educational progress would be compromised by the absence of ESY services.

ESY focuses on critical learning skills that impact maintenance of educational benefit and loss of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Critical learning skills may include communication skills, self-help skills, social-emotional skills, and motor skills. Loss of a specific academic or functional skill may not qualify the student for ESY services unless it results in loss of meaningful educational benefit.

ESY services can be provided in a variety of forms and locations depending on the child's needs, including: the

classroom setting, an intra-school cooperative program, a cooperative program with another agency, limited child contact (3-4 times during the summer to prevent regression), a week of intensive review prior to the start of the regular school year, multi-school shared programs, community-based programs, transition opportunities, and services provided by the parent in the home and supported by school personnel.

Children should be considered for ESY services at least annually, and no later than 45 days before the end of the regular school year. This decision must be documented on the IEP and a prior written notice (PWN) must be completed to notify parents as to whether or not their child has been determined eligible for ESY services. According to the Arizona Department of Education, "Documentation of ESY services shall specify which goal(s) will be reinforced during ESY services...shall describe the type of services (such as direct instruction, specific related services, consultation, or supervision), the beginning date of services and the ending date of services, the minutes per week of each service, and where the service will be provided." Children who qualify for ESY one year are not automatically eligible for ESY the next year.

Decisions about whether a child is eligible for ESY services should be made based on data that is collected throughout the school year. IEP teams that meet annually in the fall, for example, should defer decisions regarding ESY until later in the school year when sufficient data has been generated. It is a shared right of both teachers and parents to defer this decision until later in the school year as necessary.

Here are a few things to keep in mind regarding ESY services:

- Determination of the type and amount of ESY services is made on an individual basis.
- ESY services are for maintenance of regular school year goals and objectives as well as critical learning skills.
- Least restrictive environment during ESY may not be the same as during the regular school year.
- Related services (speech, occupational, physical therapy) must also be considered.
- Transportation must be considered as part of ESY services.
- Modifications and accommodations are required as during the regular school year.

For more information on ESY see Parent Information Network Clearinghouse document "A Parent Guide to Understanding Extended School Year (ESY) Services" (SE26) that is available online at www.ade.az.gov/ess/pinspals or by contacting your local PIN Specialist also available online.

Summer Recreation

By Teri Rademacher and Johanna Bookbinder

Summer is just around the corner and many parents have begun exploring activity options for their children. When planning for summer activities or camp it is important to take a few minutes and have a discussion about what type of activities or camp might be appropriate for your child. Are you looking for a specific hour long activity, a half-day program, or a week long summer camp? Is socialization with same age peers in an inclusive setting important? Is your child interested in developing a specific skill or exploring an area of interest? Once you have formulated an idea of what you are looking for, it will make your search a bit easier.

So, where do you start looking? Numerous cities across the state offer specialized programming options for children with disabilities, as well as inclusive recreation programs for teens and youth. If you are not familiar with what is available in your area, a great place to start is to contact the Parks and Recreation department in your city or town. The Internet is also a great tool to use when searching for programs and activities. Many of the disability related organizations offer their own list of contacts for summer programs and camps.

What questions should you ask when searching for a summer program or camp? The following are some of the questions that might help you to determine if a program is appropriate for your child:

- ✓ Is the program designed for children with disabilities?
- ✓ Is the program an inclusive one where your child can participate with children without disabilities?
- ✓ What training does the staff receive and what are the policies that guide their behavior?
- ✓ What education and experience is deemed necessary to be a counselor/instructor?
- ✓ What is the ratio of adults to children?
- ✓ What type of first aid or medical assistance is available?
- ✓ Are parents welcome to attend?
- ✓ Are the activities coordinated and designed according to the age and abilities of the child?
- ✓ Is the program flexible, or is it highly structured?
- ✓ Is a snack provided during the program?
- ✓ Are special accommodations available for children with dietary concerns?
- ✓ Is assistance with toileting available?

Several of the Parent Information Network Clearinghouse (PINC) documents might be helpful when looking for summer recreation programs. The "PIN Blue Pages: Disability Related Resources" (GR07) is a comprehensive listing and includes contact information. Also the various disability information sheets contain a listing of resources available regarding a specific disability (i.e. Autism, Emotional Disability). For copies of these resources, contact your regional PIN Specialist or visit our website at www.ade.az.gov/ess/pinspals.

In addition, we hope you find the following list of resources helpful in your search for summer recreation for your children.

Have a cool and safe summer!

Resources

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities

Website: www.nichcy.org
 Phone: 1-800-695-0285 (Voice/TTY)
 P. O. Box 1492
 Washington, DC 20013-1492
 "Summer Camps for Children with Disabilities: 2006"

Arizona Dream Catcher Equestrians

Website: www.azdreamcatcher.org
 Phone: 602-983-4803 or 480-983-4803
 2945 East Tepee Street
 Apache Junction, AZ 85219

TEACH (Therapeutic Equine Academy for Children)

Website: www.pinalcountyschools.org/TEACH
 Phone: 520-466-7002
 3745 North LaBrea Road
 Eloy, AZ 85231

Tucson Parks and Recreation

Website: www.ezeereg.com
 Phone: 520-791-4504
 1000 South Randolph Way
 Tucson, AZ 85716

Summer Day Camp - Arizona Center for the Handicapped (ARCH)

Website: www.archaz.org
 Phone: 602-230-2226
 1550 West Colter Street
 Phoenix, AZ 85015

The National Center on Physical Activity and Disability (NCPAD)

Website: www.ncpad.org
 Phone: 1-800-900-8086 (voice and TTY)
 1640 West Roosevelt Road
 Chicago, IL 60608-6904
 Click on **Programs** on the left menu!

Adapted Recreation - City of Scottsdale Adapted Recreation Services

Phone: 480-312-0218
 2311 North Miller Road
 Scottsdale, AZ 85257

Special thanks to Johanna Bookbinder, City of Scottsdale Adapted Recreation Services, for her contributions to this article.

Informal and Formal Solutions to Problems *Ribs and Jeans or Lobsters and Tuxedos?*

By Teri Rademacher

One of the most important things that parents can do for their school aged children is to establish a line of communication with the classroom teacher(s). This is especially important for those of us that have children in special education. Developing those lines of communication and establishing supportive partnerships with our children's teachers is critical to the success of their educational programming. Effective communication is vital to clarify the issue and assist in any problem solving process. The Parent Information Network Clearinghouse (PINC) has excellent resources to help. "The Importance of Good Communication Skills" (RB03), "How to Talk So Schools Will Listen" (RB04) and "A Fresh Start: Partnering with the Teacher" (RB10) are just some of the resources available that address relationship building.

When questions or concerns arise regarding your child's special education program, it is important for parents to know where to turn for answers or to seek a resolution. There are informal and formal ways to address an issue. I like to refer to the informal solutions as the ribs and jeans approach and to the more formal solutions as lobster and tuxedos.

Ribs and Jeans: This is the informal approach to issues and should be utilized first. If you are unable to reach a resolution after speaking with the **teacher**, the next step would be to speak to the school **principal**. However, if the issue is still unresolved after speaking with the principal, it would then be appropriate to make an appointment with the district's **director of special education**. If you are still not satisfied with the responses you have received, then you will want to make an appointment to see the **superintendent** of the school district. Depending on the issue, you may want to request (in writing) an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting to seek input from the team. The ribs and jeans approach is always the most desirable way to seek answers to questions or resolutions to issues as it is usually amicable, informal, and less likely to damage established supportive partnerships.

Most issues can be resolved by following the chain of command within your school district. However, should you encounter an issue that is not resolved successfully within the school district, there exists a more formal process of dispute resolution or the lobsters and tuxedos approach.

Lobsters and Tuxedos: Some issues may require outside assistance, in order to resolve them. You may choose to request **mediation**, which is a process that includes a non partisan third party who serves as a mediator (facilitator) and is contracted by the Arizona Department of Education (ADE). Both parties must agree to participate in the mediation process. This process usually takes one to one and a half days to complete, is confidential, and requires the participants to communicate directly with each other to work toward a mutually agreeable solution. A pamphlet detailing the mediation process and procedures can be found on the ADE website: www.ade.az.gov/ess/dispute.

A parent can also file a **formal complaint** with the state. This process is not as immediate and involves the writing of a formal letter of complaint detailing the issues. During the initial stage of the complaint process, the ADE will make an attempt at **early resolution** by contacting both parties and providing them with the opportunity to identify the concerns and reach an agreement. If the early resolution process is not effective, the complaint will then be assigned to an investigator. The complaint process should be completed within a 60 day timeline and results in a written report that outlines the action to be taken by the school district to rectify the situation. The document, "Complaint System Relating to the Education of Children with Disabilities", detailing the complaint procedures can be found on the ADE website: www.ade.az.gov/ess/dispute.

The most formal process available through the ADE, Exceptional Student Services is **due process**. In Arizona, there is a one-tier due process system. In accordance with IDEA '04, the party requesting a due process hearing is required to provide notice to the other party and to the ADE. Once the request for due process is received by the ADE, it is immediately forwarded to the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) for assignment to an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ). Schools are responsible for the cost of the hearing. The ALJ decision can be appealed to a state court of competent jurisdiction or to federal court.

When seeking to resolve issues regarding your child's special education program, no matter what the approach, it is important to make sure that you keep a log of your contacts, present yourself in a calm manner, utilize documentation whenever possible to validate your position or concern, and be an active listener. Being knowledgeable about the various options for conflict resolution, will ultimately enable you to receive the desired outcomes without damaging those established supportive partnerships and lines of communication. Besides, you certainly would not want to show up for a hayride wearing a tuxedo!

The PIN Clearinghouse documents in this article can be found on our website at www.ade.az.gov/ess/pinspals.

Now Available - IEP Training

Participation in the IEP Process provides an overview of the purpose of the IEP, who may participate in the IEP meeting, how to prepare for and participate in the IEP process. For more information, or to schedule a training, please contact your regional PIN Specialist:

Apache, Navajo: Jana Bays – 928-537-0250

Coconino, Mohave, Yavapai: Allison Meritt – 928-289-5834

Gila, Pinal: Tina Swearingen – 520-836-3023

La Paz, Yuma: Teri Rademacher – 928-344-0141

East Maricopa: Barb Ross – 480-607-3030

West Maricopa: Sharon Moeller – 480-288-1245

Pima, Santa Cruz: Kristie Melkers – 520-225-7377

Cochise, Graham, Greenlee: Vacant/ESS – 928-679-8106

Autism Awareness Month

by Barb Ross

April is Autism Awareness Month. Organizations throughout the United States will be hosting events to help bring attention to this developmental delay that is now affecting 1:166 children in the USA. According to the Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) §15-761 (1), Autism is defined as “a developmental disability that significantly affects verbal and non-verbal communication and social interaction and that adversely affects educational performance. Characteristics include irregularities and impairments in communication, engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines and unusual responses to sensory experiences. Autism does not include children with characteristics of emotional disability...”

On April 8, 2006, the second annual "Walk for Autism Research", presented by the Southwest Autism Research

and Resource Center and SuperCoups, will be held in Phoenix.

This event will benefit the newly merged Autism Speaks organization. Autism Speaks and the National Alliance for Autism Research have recently merged their two organizations to create the largest research organization dedicated to autism in the country. Through the efforts of both organizations, the collective Autism Speaks has raised over \$70 million for research with over \$30 million committed thus far. Last year's walk in Phoenix raised over \$188,000 with more than 2000 participants. Come out this year and help make a difference in the search for more information relating to Autism.

The walk will be held at Margaret T. Hance Park in downtown Phoenix (the park that is on top of the 7th Street tunnel). There will be entertainment, activities and refreshments, so be sure to let people know they should bring the whole family!

For more information on how to sign up, join a team or for information in Spanish visit www.autismwalk.org/arizona.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Job Opportunity: There is an opening for a Parent Information Network Specialist in Region 4, which covers Cochise, Graham, and Greenlee counties. If you are interested, check out the Request for Proposal (RFP) on the Arizona Department of Education Procurement website at www.ade.az.gov/procurement/Opps, or contact Sheila Wallace, Procurement Officer, at 602-542-6537.

Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP): There is a vacancy for a parent of a child with a disability, or individual with a disability, on SEAP. For more information, go to www.ade.az.gov/ess/SEAP or contact Jeannette Zemeida at 602-542-3855

Name or Address Change: *Network News* is currently distributed to over 4,000 parents, service providers, and schools. We are continuously updating our mailing list. If you have had a change to your name or address, please let us know so that we can update our records. Please contact your Regional PIN Specialist or Carla Valenzuela at 602-542-3852 with your updated information.

The contents of this publication were compiled by Barb Ross, Contract No. ED05-0095, and Teri Rademacher, Contract No. ED06-0026-03, with assistance from Kristie Melkers with funds allocated by the U.S. Department of Education under IDEA 2004. The contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the agency nor should endorsement by the federal government be assumed. The Arizona Department of Education of the State of Arizona does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs, activities or in its hiring and employment practices. If you have questions or grievances related to this policy, please contact the Administrative Services DAS at 602-542-3186. This document is in the public domain and may be freely reproduced in its current format. For more information, call the Parent Information Network at 602-542-3852 or 800-352-4558.

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